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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Summary of the intersessional workshop on the right to peace

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Summary

In its resolution 35/4, the Human Rights Council decided to convene a half-day intersessional workshop to discuss the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Peace and requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to submit a report on the workshop, in the form of a summary, to the Council at its thirty-ninth session.

The present report provides a summary of the discussions at the workshop, which was held in Geneva on 14 June 2018. At the workshop, the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, six panellists and other participants made recommendations, notably on possible means to build peace within and between societies pursuant to article 2 of the Declaration on the Right to Peace, on sustainable measures in line with article 3 of the Declaration and on educating for peace in accordance with article 4.

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I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to its resolution 35/4, on 14 June 2018 the Human Rights Council convened in Geneva, with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, a half-day intersessional workshop on the right to peace to discuss the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Peace. Following an opening statement by the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, the intersessional workshop was organized in the form of three panel discussions, focusing, respectively, on articles 2, 3 and 4 of the Declaration, followed by concluding remarks from the moderator for the three panel discussions, Jennifer Philpot-Nissen of the World Council of Churches.

2. More than 60 representatives from Member States, specialized United Nations agencies, special procedures of the Council and civil society participated in the discussions. The present report provides a summary of the discussions at the intersessional workshop and the recommendations made by the participants.

II. Opening statement

3. In her opening remarks, the Deputy High Commissioner recalled that the first article of the Declaration on the Right to Peace proclaimed that everyone had the right to enjoy peace such that all human rights were promoted and protected and development was fully realized. In his address to the Council at its thirty-fourth session, the Secretary-General had identified prevention of conflict and its drivers as the priority for everything the United Nations did in support of Member States, and had observed that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights constituted the best prevention tool for that task, as the rights set out in it not only identified many of the root causes of conflict but provided real world solutions through real change on the ground.[1]

4. Respect for international human rights law provided the necessary building blocks to build and sustain peaceful societies and allow them to flourish. Over the past 70 years, those human rights had been renewed and elaborated in international human rights treaties and declarations, including the Declaration on the Right to Peace. As noted in the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, if man was not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, human rights should be protected by the rule of law. The Deputy High Commissioner asserted that people who did not face discrimination in access to employment, education, food, health care and housing, and who could speak, complain and vote freely to remove tyrants, would rarely take up arms.

5. The multilateral system offered important tools and mechanisms for cooperating on conflict prevention and peace. Nevertheless, stronger cooperation between the Human Rights Council, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission was possible, needed and crucial in order to better inform and guide United Nations decision-making and engagement towards sustainable peace. The findings of treaty bodies and the special procedures and recommendations from the universal periodic review were also key tools, which required follow-up. Furthermore, integration of human rights expertise in peacekeeping and special political missions should not be eroded but rather strengthened and enhanced.

6. The Deputy High Commissioner noted that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provided invaluable opportunities to prevent crises, insecurity, violence and conflict and to build sustainable peace. As part of that rights-encompassing agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals sought to address the root causes of insecurity through a focus on reducing inequalities and eliminating pervasive discrimination in order to ensure more peaceful and inclusive societies. She recommended paying specific attention to the

[1] See www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2017-02-27/secretary-generals-human-rights-council-remarks.

situation of young people in that context, and emphasized that the recent recognition by the Security Council of the powerful potential role of youth for peace and prevention should be matched by the Council's commitment to leading States to better appreciate the importance of respecting the right of young people to a future of sustainable peace. The median age of the populations of countries at war was under 25 years, whereas the populations of countries supplying arms were middle aged and aging rapidly. The Sustainable Development Goals would not be realized without the engagement of youth. The greatest moral, social and political challenge for humanity was to mobilize the energy, creativity and vision of youth in pursuit of peace.

III. Overview of panel presentations and discussions

A. Means to build peace within and between societies

7. The first panel focused on article 2 of the Declaration on the Right to Peace, looking at means to build peace within and between societies, including by ensuring equality and non-discrimination, justice and the rule of law and freedom from fear and want. The panel was chaired by the President of the Human Rights Council, Vojislav Šuc. The panellists were Christian Guillermet-Fernández, Director-General of Foreign Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica and former Chair-Rapporteur of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on the draft United Nations declaration on the right to peace (2012–2015), and Maya Brehm, an adviser at the non-governmental organization "Article 36".

8. Mr. Guillermet-Fernández thanked the Deputy High Commissioner for her inspiring opening statement and he acknowledged the contributions by diplomats, representatives of civil society and academics on the long walk that had ultimately led to the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Peace in 2016. He noted that the Council had been working on the promotion of the right of peoples to peace since 2008, following up on previous resolutions on that subject adopted by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.

9. Mr. Guillermet-Fernández presented the history of the Declaration. In its resolution 20/15, the Council had established an open-ended intergovernmental working group with the mandate to negotiate a draft declaration on the right to peace, on the basis of a draft submitted by the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee. He had been elected Chairperson-Rapporteur of the working group. At its first session, the working group had noted that the text submitted by the Advisory Committee (A/HRC/20/31) did not have sufficient support, even from those Member States that had actively supported the process within the Council. In order to maintain the important work done by the Advisory Committee, he had decided to revive the spirit of Council resolutions 14/3 and 17/16, which recalled the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/243. He had highlighted that all the main elements of the right to peace identified by the Advisory Committee had been elaborated previously by Member States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations in various declarations and programmes of action, and had argued that the right to peace and the culture of peace were two sides of the same coin.

10. On 1 July 2016, by its resolution 32/28, the Council had adopted the Declaration on the Right to Peace by a majority of its member States and, on 19 December 2016, the General Assembly had adopted the Declaration by its resolution 71/189. The Declaration had been the result of three years of work with various stakeholders, including civil society organizations. However, all States and regional groups within the Council and the General Assembly had been unable to reach full consensus, owing to the lack of agreement on the title and article 1, both of which referred to "the right to peace".

11. Mr. Guillermet-Fernández stressed that the Declaration followed the line of Renaissance humanism. Erasmus of Rotterdam had been the pre-eminent representative of that intellectual and ethical philosophy and, for example, had recognized the right to peace in his book *The Complaint of Peace* in 1517. Other recognized philosophers, poets and

thinkers — such as Hugo Grotius, Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Friedrich Schiller, Victor Hugo, Voltaire and Ortega y Gasset — had subsequently contributed positively in their works to elaborating the right to peace. Furthermore, in the period of the League of Nations, several jurists had written important books on international law in which they had developed the principles and norms of the right to peace.

12. Regarding possible measures to implement the Declaration, Mr. Guillermet-Fernández recommended that the international community deploy maximum effort and creativity to reach an agreement on the title and article 1 of the Declaration, the only elements upon which consensus had not been reached during the negotiation process. As a positive example, he referred to the unanimous adoption on 28 March 2018 by the Inter-Parliamentary Union of its resolution on "Sustaining peace as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development", which had recognized the will of the United Nations General Assembly to continue examining the issue of the promotion and protection of the right to peace.

13. Since the Declaration on the Right to Peace focused on persons who suffered in a situation of conflict, Mr. Guillermet-Fernández suggested that the special procedure mandate holders of the Council should elaborate in their respective mandates the multidimensional notion of peace. The role of dialogue, tolerance, mediation, assistance and cooperation in the performance of the different mandates should be reinforced. Furthermore, the Council could request the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to incorporate the right to peace in its daily activities and undertake activities aimed at strengthening the interconnection between peace, human rights and development. OHCHR could also be requested to provide inter-institutional coordination within the United Nations system, in coordination with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the University for Peace, with respect to the promotion and realization of the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, human rights and development.

14. In her presentation, Ms. Brehm addressed the role of States under article 2 of the Declaration, with a particular focus on disarmament as a means of building peace between societies. In over twenty years of work in the field of disarmament and multilateral weapons control, she had not often encountered the terms "right to peace" or "peace". In a book published in 1967 the idea of real peace in the world and general disarmament had been looked on as utopian,[2] and in 2018 it seemed that peace was still not a possibility that disarmament practitioners prepared for. In the sphere of multilateral weapons regulation, non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament the notion of "peace" tended to be confined to the preambles of instruments and declarations of major conferences or to statements made by observers and non-governmental organizations.

15. Ms. Brehm also highlighted that the term "peace" was often accompanied by the term "security". For example, the Secretary-General had recently expressed hope that the agenda set out in *Securing Our Common Future: an Agenda for Disarmament* would help set the world on a path towards sustainable peace and security for all. The Agenda for Disarmament itself identified peace and security as the central reasons why the United Nations pursued disarmament. The Agenda described disarmament as a tool for preventing and ending armed conflict; mitigating the impacts of conflict; protecting civilians; upholding the principles of humanity; preventing the easy resumption of hostilities; ensuring and maintaining stability; promoting sustainable development; maintaining or restoring international peace and security; and preserving, securing and sustaining peace. Disarmament measures taken by States to achieve those goals could also contribute to the implementation of article 2 of the Declaration, which enjoined States to respect, implement and promote equality and non-discrimination, justice and the rule of law, and to guarantee freedom from fear and want as a means to build peace within and between societies.

16. With regard to multilateral disarmament and weapons control measures grounded in humanitarian principles, Ms. Brehm noted that the focus of such humanitarian disarmament

[2] See Leonard C. Lewin, *Report from Iron Mountain: On the Possibility and Desirability of Peace* (New York, Dial Press, 1967).

was on mitigating the impacts of armed conflict, protecting civilians and upholding the principle of humanity. Thus parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects had adopted restrictions and prohibitions on, for example, the use of incendiary weapons and blinding laser weapons in order to alleviate the suffering of the victims of war. States parties were expected to continue the codification and progressive development of the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict and more recently had held talks in response to concerns raised by the increasing autonomy in weapons systems.

17. Ms. Brehm emphasized that disarmament could help guard against the erosion of long-standing legal principles for the protection of the human person. Debates on science, technology and weaponization included the question of how new weapons and evolving practices of armed violence accorded with existing norms and shaped their future development. Furthermore, disarmament practice could also help support the international rule of law, as illustrated by many States' reaffirmation of their commitment to a rules-based international system in reaction to the use of chemical weapons and recent threats to use nuclear weapons.

18. Promoting the rule of law required respect for human rights. While international humanitarian law remained the dominant legal framework for humanitarian disarmament, some instruments explicitly recognized the human rights dimension of weapons and armed violence. Notably, States increasingly accepted a duty to respond to the needs and realize the rights of survivors of anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions and the remnants of other explosive weapons. Both the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons contained provisions under which States assumed an obligation to provide assistance to survivors and other affected persons, without discrimination, including medical care, rehabilitation and psychological support, and to provide for their social and economic inclusion in accordance with human rights law. States had also assumed increasing responsibilities in relation to the aftermath of weapons use. For example, clearance of contaminated land was a key duty assumed by States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (Protocol V); and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, States parties also assumed an obligation to take measures for the environmental remediation of contaminated areas. That was consistent with the recognition in the treaty of the grave implications of nuclear weapons for human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations.

19. Beyond measures in relation to particular weapon types, recent humanitarian disarmament debates had also provided an opportunity to engage with more systemic issues that obstructed peace within and between societies. In particular, gendered aspects of armed violence and the differential impacts of weapons had been problematized, for example in relation to so-called signature drone strikes and other applications of algorithm-based targeting and in relation to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Furthermore, States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty accepted a duty to assess the risk that weapons proposed for export might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international human rights law or international humanitarian law, including serious acts of gender-based violence. Victim assistance under those instruments had to be age and gender sensitive. The preamble of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons acknowledged the disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on women and girls and the disproportionate impact of nuclear-weapon activities on indigenous peoples. Ms. Brehm also noted discussions about the lack of inclusiveness and diversity in forums and bodies that deliberated on and made decisions about disarmament policy.

20. Ms. Brehm stressed that disarmament processes offered an important chance for transformation towards more peaceful and less violent ways of resolving conflicts, for example by changing the perception of threats in the relations between actors and by

building confidence. The transformative potential of disarmament would ultimately depend on its capacity to foster an understanding and a conviction that violence-free relations and peaceful conflict resolution were possible and sustainable. Furthermore, disarmament mechanisms contributed to the institutionalization of a cooperative security order. Disarmament institutions could promote multilateralism, uphold the rule of law and develop and maintain norms for the common good; however, they needed to address shortcomings in terms of diversity.

21. Ms. Brehm noted that arms control and disarmament had traditionally focused on preventing the outbreak of war, maintaining international stability and addressing other threats to the military security of the State. Disarmament was still articulated mainly in State-centric terms and in line with negative conceptions of peace. Yet new concepts of security that had been adopted into the disarmament vocabulary over the past two decades recognized that security could not be achieved by working against one another, but only through peaceful cooperation with one another. That had enabled humanitarian disarmament to contribute to the realization of the positive dimensions of peace by addressing threats to the health, safety, well-being and socioeconomic and human development of individuals and groups of people (human security) and by promoting the realization of their rights. Present-day disarmament discourse remained essentially security oriented and did not recognize peace as the goal and the basis for political action. Because security tended to be construed in political practice as the ability to defend one's own interests against perceived threats, security primed the maintenance of peace and justified continued militarization and the development of weapons.

22. Ms. Brehm observed that in disarmament practice peace was either portrayed as a desirable yet illusive end goal that was subordinate to one's own security needs, or as a process meant to civilize the conduct of conflicts through increasing regulation. Humanitarian disarmament, through its emphasis on mitigating the effects of the use of particular weapons, tacitly normalized and legitimized the use of weapons more generally. The security orientation of disarmament hampered its capacity to effectively address the structural causes of violence, foster more peaceful relations among actors and institutionalize a preventive, or even precautionary, orientation to weapons development. In order to promote the conditions of sustainable and positive peace and to break away from the continued cycle of developing new and more effective weapons, there was a need to overcome internalized attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that legitimated the use of force and militarization. Disarmament had to recognize peace as the goal and the basis for political action.

23. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of the Holy See noted that multilateral diplomacy was an important means of ensuring peace and preventing conflict, and that peace was not simply the absence of warfare based on a precarious balance of power, but instead required daily efforts towards achieving justice among all human beings and development that respected each person.

24. Stressing that the right to peace was the backbone for the enjoyment of all human rights, including the right to development, the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela stated that the United Nations system should prioritize the implementation of the right to peace and the right to development in view of the increased number of armed conflicts, the arms race, economic sanctions and unilateral coercive measures that hampered the development of entire peoples.

25. The representative of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation stressed the importance of building confidence through disarmament and non-violent communication, which should be taught in schools in order to implement the right to peace and allow future generations to enjoy that right and avoid mass killings.

26. The representative of the Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law reiterated the proposal that had been put forward by 692 civil society organizations in September 2017 to revise General Assembly resolution 71/189 and to include specific references to the right to disarmament; the right to human security; the right to resist and

oppose oppression, including through conscientious objection to military service; and the rights to development and environment.[3]

27. In order to fulfil article 2 of the Declaration, the representative of the Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII suggested that States should reduce their military spending, cooperate with UNESCO and the University for Peace, and create a special rapporteur or alternatively give OHCHR a specific mandate on the right to peace.

28. The representative of the Center for Global Nonkilling called for bringing persons with disabilities into the discussions on the right to peace. He also stressed that war was illegal pursuant to Article 2, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Charter of the United Nations, and that the exception for self-defence was strictly limited under Article 51.

29. In response to the discussion, Mr. Guillermet-Fernández noted common elements that were also reflected in the Declaration. Furthermore, he suggested that national human rights institutions could be encouraged to embrace a right-to-peace perspective, including through the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

30. Ms. Brehm urged the participants of the intersessional workshop, including diplomats, to incorporate the workshop's peace-related reflections in their work in the disarmament and arms control field. She stressed the importance of framing resolutions and statements in the disarmament context with consistent language on human rights, peace and sustainability.

B. Sustainable measures

31. Evan Garcia, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council, chaired the second round table, which focused on sustainable measures pursuant to article 3 of the Declaration on the Right to Peace. That article called upon States, the United Nations and specialized agencies, and in particular UNESCO, to take appropriate sustainable measures to implement the Declaration, and it encouraged international, regional, national and local organizations and civil society to support and assist in the implementation of the Declaration. The panellists were Kostantinos Tararas, Programme Specialist in the Sector for Social and Human Sciences at UNESCO, and Jennifer Pochat, from the foundation "Paz Sin Fronteras" (Peace Without Borders).

32. Mr. Tararas recalled that the preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO declared that since wars began in the minds of men, it was in the minds of men that the defences of peace had to be constructed. The focus of UNESCO was to accomplish its humanist mission to support people in understanding each other and working together to build lasting peace, including through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. The work of UNESCO in advancing the right to peace notably involved efforts to change mindsets through global citizenship education; to create the conditions to enable lasting peace through intercultural and interreligious dialogue; and to expand partnerships by involving new actors such as cities and local authorities.

33. Global citizenship education was the response of UNESCO to the threats posed by poverty and inequalities to peace and sustainability. Global citizenship education aimed to empower learners of all ages to assume active roles, both locally and globally, in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure societies. It was based on cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural domains of learning. A key instrument for promoting global citizenship education was target 4.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which called on countries to ensure that all learners acquired the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. In that context, UNESCO had

[3] See http://nedidh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CVD-Statement-22.6.18-1.pdf.

been focusing on the prevention of violent extremism, in line with the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674).

34. With regard to the promotion of intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding, Mr. Tararas referred to activities in the context of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures 2013–2022. Those activities were underpinned by the acknowledgement that peace was not simply the absence of war, but a long-term process that required vigilance and mutual understanding through a participatory approach. The priorities of UNESCO during the second half of the International Decade included the creation of a database that focused on enabling conditions for peace, related advocacy and the development of tools to counter discrimination, xenophobia and prejudices against those who were different. In May 2018 UNESCO had published the book, *Long Walk of Peace: Towards a Culture of Prevention*, which highlighted the perspectives of 32 United Nations entities on the challenges of peacebuilding and explored how they had perceived and contributed to the peace agenda within their own areas of competence.

35. In line with the emphasis on implementation at the local level in article 3 of the Declaration, UNESCO was also working on expanding its partnerships, including through the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities. The mandate of that coalition was to promote dialogue among local decision makers, recognizing that they had a key role in promoting human rights and peace. Local authorities were duty bearers for issues that had been delegated to their level, including the right to education, housing, access to employment, participation and access to cultural rights. In 2016 UNESCO had launched the "Welcoming Cities for Refugees and Migrants" initiative, which focused on promoting inclusion and protecting rights.

36. To sustain peace and achieve sustainable development, Mr. Tararas stressed the importance of engaging in strong collective action and enhancing collaboration and partnerships, including with the business community, financial institutions, civil society and regional and subregional organizations. In addition, States should enable civil society organizations to play an active and important role in the policy process. Their role would be instrumental in identifying local level partners and in promoting peace education. With Sustainable Development Goal 11 and the New Urban Agenda as reference points, UNESCO recognized the strategic role of cities in the achievement of global commitments for peace, as the level of governance closest to the inhabitants and to the challenges and opportunities for development.

37. As key messages, Mr. Tararas stressed the need to build on the new dynamic in the area of prevention, as illustrated in recent resolutions from the General Assembly and Security Council and in reports from the Secretary-General. It was also important to promote a whole-of-government approach and to reinforce cooperation with local authorities. Furthermore, in line with a whole-of-society approach, the work with youth and women should be increased in order to promote peace and understanding. Finally, it was important to mainstream a peace perspective throughout the work of the United Nations system and across efforts to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals.

38. Ms. Pochat said that States and elected representatives had the responsibility to ensure the right to peace, the right to a culture of peace and everyone's human rights; however, legislation regulating the manufacture and trafficking of weapons was lacking or insufficient, Governments were corrupt and there was a lack of political will to end all armed conflicts.

39. Ms. Pochat called for individual and collective initiatives to achieve peace and build bridges so that everyone could experience peace and revive the essence of human values. Art, especially music, could function as a vehicle for persons individually or collectively to express in a creative manner how they saw life. Paz Sin Fronteras, which had been founded by the musicians Miguel Bosé and Juanes, aimed at contributing to the promotion of the values of peace, human rights and tolerance in the world. In order to bring people and communities closer together, the foundation had organized large concerts, for example in Cúcuta, at the border between Colombia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and in Havana.

40. The Paz Sin Fronteras foundation also played a fundamental role in mobilizing and raising awareness on the right to peace, which had ultimately led to adoption by the General Assembly of the Declaration on the Right to Peace. On the first anniversary of its adoption, Paz Sin Fronteras, the University for Peace and the UNESCO Chair on Peace, Solidarity and Intercultural Dialogue at Abat Oliba University had launched a book on the history of peace in the West,[4] exploring how various intellectuals and artists had expressed the meaning of living in peace. Through information and communication technologies, the foundation was also reaching out to younger generations and encouraged action to implement the Declaration.

41. Ms. Pochat recommended the creation of a forum for debate or a round table within the Council in order to allow civil society organizations to share best practices on educating for peace and finding peaceful solutions. In that context, she stressed the importance of ensuring a gender balance for participation at such events. Furthermore, she suggested that artists could become "ambassadors for peace" and create songs on the right to peace. Concerts and related videos could be shared on social media in order to generate awareness of how to reduce risks to peace. In addition, law schools could be encouraged to hold debates concerning the right to peace in conjunction with the University for Peace.

42. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Cuba recalled that the preservation of the right to peace and the promotion of its implementation was a fundamental obligation of all States, which required policies for the elimination of the threat or use of war, in particular nuclear war, and an international system that was based on respect for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development and the right of peoples to self-determination.

43. The representative of the Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law reiterated the following civil society proposals, which had been made in September 2017:

(a) States, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, funds and programmes should take appropriate sustainable measures to implement the Declaration on the Right to Peace, while international, regional, national and local organizations and civil society should actively participate in its implementation;

(b) All States had to implement the provisions of the Declaration in good faith by adopting relevant legislative, judicial, administrative, educational and other measures necessary to promote its effective realization;

(c) The Human Rights Council should monitor progress in the implementation of the Declaration as a permanent item on its agenda and should appoint a special rapporteur on the human right to peace;

(d) The United Nations human rights treaty bodies and relevant regional bodies should incorporate the Declaration in their protection activities.[5]

44. The representative of the Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII encouraged each State to establish a ministry of peace, which could operate in the following areas:

(a) Human rights, by providing a structure for fulfilling the duty to respect, protect and promote human rights and monitoring compliance with international standards;

(b) Alternative dispute resolution and reconciliation, by promoting a comprehensive and human rights-based approach to dispute resolution in order to solve domestic and international disputes peacefully;

(c) Peace culture and education, by promoting them as crucial tools to address the root causes of long-standing conflicts;

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[4] Miguel Bosé and David Fernández Puyana, *History of Peace in the West* (San José, 2017).

[5] See article 9 of the draft declaration proposed by civil society organizations on 20 September 2017, available at http://aedidh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Draft-UN-Declaration-HRP-20.9.17.pdf.

(d) Promotion of peace policies, by working for the good management and coordination of all the efforts to promote peace and to implement the right to peace;

(e) Violence and conflict prevention, by monitoring and preventing violence and conflicts to pursue peaceful societies and realize the right to peace.

45. The representative of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers noted that the right to live in peace was referred to in the preamble of the Constitution of Japan and that some district and high courts in Japan had recognized the existence of a right to live in peace as an individual right that might lead to remedies for victims of violations.

46. As a sustainable measure for lasting peace, the representative of the Hunger Project called for community-led development and empowerment, in particular of women, and leadership development in order to create the basis for a peaceful environment by giving people a voice in decisions that affected their lives and increasing the accountability of authorities.

47. In view of the fundamental role of education in changing the paradigm and recognizing the right to peace, the representative of Costa Rica noted that UNESCO, with its large network of associated schools, could use the Declaration on the Right to Peace as an additional tool to raise awareness and move closer to enforcement and implementation of that right.

48. In response, Mr. Tararas confirmed that UNESCO had been mobilizing different platforms to promote the right to peace, including the worldwide network of associated schools, the UNESCO chairs at academic institutions and local authorities. He reaffirmed the need for a bottom-up approach, including through youth empowerment, and stressed the importance of creativity, arts, music and sports as mediums that brought people together and could serve as vehicles for presenting messages.

49. Ms. Pochat added that social networks made it possible to know what was happening in real time. Arts and education were ways of engaging civil society and of working better as a society in a participatory manner.

C. Educating for peace

50. Mr. Garcia also chaired the third session, which focused on educating for peace pursuant to article 4 of the Declaration. The panellists were Francisco Rojas-Aravena, Rector of the University for Peace, and Koumbou Boly Barry, Special Rapporteur on the right to education.

51. Mr. Rojas-Aravena stressed that if people wanted peace, they had to educate for peace. Conflicts and crises were increasingly complex and required in-depth analysis, the construction of shared visions and pre-emptive actions. Such responses to conflicts and crises provided better opportunities for prevention, as highlighted by the Secretary-General and in the documents on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In the current context of global interdependence, it was necessary to visualize and generate frameworks and operational platforms that allowed the link between peace and security, development and human rights to be transformed into specific actions that contributed to the de-escalation of national, regional and international tensions.

52. In that regard, Mr. Rojas-Aravena recalled that article 1 of the Declaration recognized the right of all people to enjoy peace, human rights and development, which also represented the three pillars of the United Nations. Furthermore, article 4 of the Declaration emphasized that international and national institutions of education for peace should be promoted in order to strengthen the spirit of tolerance, dialogue, cooperation and solidarity among all human beings. To that end, the Declaration provided that the University for Peace "should contribute to the great universal task of educating for peace by engaging in teaching, research, post-graduate training and dissemination of knowledge".

53. Mr. Rojas-Aravena noted that the University for Peace, together with Paz Sin Fronteras and the UNESCO Chair on Peace at Abat Oliba University, had published a book on the past, present and future of the right to peace.[6] In order to better understand the Declaration, the book explored several important developments in international law, such as the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace (1978), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace (1984) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Human Rights Declaration (2012). The book's authors had also conducted a detailed review of the codification process of the right to peace, initiated by the Commission on Human Rights and continued by the Human Rights Council, following the initial impulse of UNESCO. The valuable work carried out in that field by the Advisory Committee and the open-ended intergovernmental working group on the draft United Nations declaration on the right to peace were also analysed. Additionally, the book demonstrated the added value of the Declaration in the field of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and culture of peace.

54. Mr. Rojas-Aravena reaffirmed the commitment of the University for Peace to education for peace, prevention, non-violence, inclusion, social cohesion, the rule of law, legality and ethics. He stressed the importance of developing education that promoted competencies, values and behaviours that contributed to peace, justice, sustainable development, democracy, human rights, solidarity and the protection of the planet. Promoting and supporting human rights meant building coexistence, cooperation and solidarity, all of which were essential foundations for peace.

55. Achieving and sustaining peace required prevention, the development of new leadership and holistic educational policies on the different tendencies that influenced conflicts and complex crises. The University for Peace had developed programmes for prevention education, carried out through its master's and doctorate degrees, its customized training courses and its academic publications. The University was educating and training leaders for the prevention, mediation, transformation and resolution of conflicts, and for contributing to post-conflict contexts, all with the aim of achieving sustainable peace.

56. In order to promote and implement the Declaration, Mr. Rojas-Aravena suggested the creation by the Council of a biannual forum for education for peace and human rights. That could be a space for dialogue and interaction between different entities of the United Nations system and other stakeholders, including civil society and grass-roots organizations, on the different issues related to peace and human rights. The structure of the forum would be inspired by best practices and the previous experience of the United Nations and other inclusive global forums.

57. Furthermore, Mr. Rojas-Aravena recommended establishing, under the leadership of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, a working group comprised of United Nations entities based in Geneva that would meet annually to analyse United Nations best practices on peace education. The results of those meetings could be compiled into an annual publication, which would increase the possibility of those best practices being replicated worldwide.

58. In addition, he suggested creating an educational museum for peace and a multicultural space for dialogue between all stakeholders, particularly youth. The University for Peace offered its campus in Costa Rica as a place for dialogue, the exchange of mutual knowledge and the generation of trust and public policy. Peace education should also be included in the monitoring and implementation mechanisms of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. In that context, the following areas should be focused on: the creation of an annual peace education award; the organization of dialogues and regional consultations in the field of irenology (the study of peace); the prevention of violent extremism; the promotion of cultural diversity; actions to combat racism, intolerance and xenophobia; the integration of a course on education for global citizenship in schools; and promoting studies on non-violent communication and education for peace in university curricula.

[6] Christian Guillermet-Fernández and David Fernández Puyana, with the contribution of Miguel Bosé, *The Right to Peace: Past, Present and Future* (San José, 2017).

59. Finally, Mr. Rojas-Aravena stressed the importance of effectively implementing the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, with a focus on human security and advancement towards the goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The culture of peace should be strengthened within the framework of the United Nations through the progressive development of a culture of prevention, cooperation, the rule of law and the construction of solid institutions. Developing the right to peace required creating State policies to dismantle the existing culture of war, which meant educating for coexistence, inclusion, participation, cooperation, reconciliation, democratic governance and freedom. In order to increase the number of students from different nationalities represented at the University for Peace, States were requested to consider establishing scholarship programmes for their nationals.

60. Ms. Boly Barry began by noting that Nelson Mandela had called education the most powerful weapon for transforming the world. As Special Rapporteur on the right to education, she reaffirmed the Deputy High Commissioner's call for a holistic vision of peace. Furthermore, she highlighted that the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which also included in its article 13 the right of everyone to education, promoted equality of opportunity. However, more than 1 billion human beings around the world did not enjoy the right to education. She noted that most of them were women, highlighting that there was a correlation between exclusion and inequality.

61. Peace was not the lack of conflict in a given territory; it also related to spirituality and love between and among human beings. Ms. Boly Barry commended UNESCO for its work on global citizenship education and a culture of peace and called for the development of more norms and standards surrounding spirituality. Since in times of war there was fear of others, both individually and collectively, that fear needed to be addressed, notably through education as a fundamental pillar of societies.

62. Ms. Boly Barry recommended that UNESCO continue with its vision in pursuing Sustainable Development Goal 4 (quality education). Furthermore, States should bear in mind peace and spirituality. In many countries civil society organizations had developed useful activities and experiences in pursuing a culture of peace. Information on such work in educating for peace should be better disseminated. In that context, educational outreach and the involvement of children, youth and women should be increased. For many years, women had been marginalized in peacebuilding processes and they should be brought back into peacebuilding. Finally, she recognized the important work by academics to develop best practices, for example in transitional justice and education, and she called for better dissemination at the international and national levels of such best practices.

63. In the following discussion, the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia recommended that academic institutions promote the notion of a pacifist State and closely examine the propagation of the glorification of war and apologies of war in view of their impacts on societies and the negative consequences for economic, cultural and social development.

64. The representative of the Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law reiterated the following civil society proposals, which had been made in September 2017:

(a) All peoples and individuals had a right to a comprehensive peace and human rights education within the framework of the Declaration and the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace and dialogue among cultures;

(b) Education and socialization for peace was a sine qua non for unlearning war and building identities disentangled from violence;

(c) Everyone had the right to denounce any event that threatened or violated the right to peace, and to participate freely in peaceful activities for the defence of the right to peace;

(d) States should undertake to revise national laws and policies that were discriminatory against women, and adopt legislation to address domestic violence, trafficking of women and girls and gender-based violence.[7]

65. Noting that the right to peace also included the right to human rights education and education for peace, the representative of the Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII stressed that defending dialogue and peaceful coexistence among cultures, civilizations, religions or beliefs was essential to combating racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in order to create an environment conducive to stable peace.

66. Referring to the 2009 expert workshop on the right of peoples to peace (see A/HRC/14/38), the former Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order highlighted the importance of education on human rights instruments, notably the prohibition of propaganda for war (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 20 (1)), freedom of opinion and expression (ibid., art. 19) and freedom of religion or belief, including the right of conscientious objection to military service (ibid., art. 18).

IV. Concluding remarks

67. In her concluding remarks, the moderator highlighted several recommendations made by panellists and participants during the intersessional workshop. The international community should deploy maximum efforts and creativity to reach a consensus on the title and article 1 of the Declaration on the Right to Peace. All States should review and amend their laws and policies in the light of international best practices regarding the promotion of peace and human rights. In order to promote the conditions for sustainable peace and to break away from the continuing cycle of developing new and more effective weapons, disarmament practitioners should overcome internalized attitudes that legitimated the use of force and militarization. Civil society activities should be supported in assisting the implementation of the Declaration, including through advocacy, research, social networks, art and concerts.

68. The moderator also noted the suggestion that various special procedure mandate holders should elaborate in their respective mandates the multidimensional notion of peace and the role of dialogue, tolerance, mediation, assistance and cooperation. The 2030 Agenda should be used in the context of implementing the Declaration by building a shared vision of society, with equality and inclusion at the centre of implementation efforts and a holistic and people-centred approach.

69. Another recommendation reiterated by the moderator was for the Human Rights Council to create a biannual forum for education for peace and human rights, providing space for dialogue and interaction between different entities of the United Nations system and other stakeholders, including civil society and grass-roots organizations, on the different issues related to peace and human rights. She also noted the recommendation that OHCHR should mainstream the right to peace and make related information accessible on its website. A working group comprised of United Nations entities based in Geneva should be established to analyse United Nations best practices on peace education, publishing the results of its annual meetings.

70. Moreover, the moderator recalled the suggestion to create an educational museum for peace or a multicultural space for dialogue between all stakeholders, particularly youth. Peace education should be included in the monitoring and implementation mechanisms of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. Human rights education should include a focus on non-discrimination, religious tolerance, the prohibition of propaganda for war and the right to conscientious

[7] See article 5 of the draft declaration proposed by civil society organizations on 20 September 2017.

objection to military service. All efforts should be gender sensitive and include women, children and persons with disabilities in the work on the right to peace.

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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Intersessional seminar on the protection of the family: role of the family in supporting the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Summary

The present report, mandated by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 35/13, summarizes the presentations made and debates held during the one-day intersessional seminar on the impact of the implementation by States of their obligations under relevant provisions of international human rights law with regard to the protection of the family on the role of the family in supporting the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons.

In the report, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reflects the contributions made by experts, States, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations during the intersessional seminar held on 11 June 2018, including challenges and best practices examined as well as the conclusions and recommendations identified.

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Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Opening of the intersessional seminar	3
III.	Summary of proceedings	4
	A. International framework for the protection of the family and human rights of older persons	4
	B. The role of the family in providing long-term care and support to older persons	7
	C. The role of the family in promoting age-friendly environments	10
IV.	Conclusions and recommendations	13

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 35/13, the Human Rights Council decided to convene, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), a one-day intersessional seminar on the impact of the implementation by States of their obligations under relevant provisions of international human rights law with regard to the protection of the family, on the role of the family in supporting the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons, and to discuss challenges and best practices in that regard, with the participation of Member States and other relevant stakeholders, including national human rights institutions, academic experts and civil society organizations.

2. The intersessional seminar took place in Geneva on 11 June 2018 and was attended by representatives of Member States, national human rights institutions, United Nations entities, civil society and academia. The present report contains a summary of the proceedings, and the conclusions and recommendations emerging from the seminar. The agenda for the seminar and the list of participants are available on the OHCHR website.[1] The seminar was webcast on UN Web TV.[2]

II. Opening of the intersessional seminar

3. Speaking on behalf of a cross-regional core group of main sponsors of Human Rights Council resolution 35/13, the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, Alaa Youssef, said that the family was an undisputable social, cultural, moral and religious value. In accordance with international human rights law, States had to provide the widest possible support and protection to families, so as to allow them to fully assume their role in the community and to provide a conducive environment for the growth and well-being of their members. In addition, families played a key role in fostering social development, cohesion and integration, and in the effective empowerment of women. Families had a primary responsibility for the nurturing, guidance and protection of children, for the full and harmonious development of their personality. Older persons could make important contributions to economic and social development, with their experience, skills and knowledge. Older persons, particularly older women, also played a vital role within families as caregivers for spouses, grandchildren and other relatives, which often remained unrecognized and undervalued. In addition, older persons contributed to strengthening social capital by actively participating in community and civic life.

4. The Chief of the Human Rights and Economic and Social Issues Section of OHCHR, Lene Wendland, delivered the opening statement on behalf of the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, in which she recalled that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society. Society and the State should protect the family, as a strong force for social cohesion and integration, intergenerational solidarity and social development. With rapidly ageing populations in countries all around the world, families provided most of the care of older persons, especially women. Changing living arrangements and lifestyles were making

[1] See www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/IntersessionalSeminarProtectionFamilyHROlderPersons.aspx.

[2] Opening and session 1: http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/treaty-bodies/watch/opening-session-1-intersessional-seminar-on-family-older-persons-human-rights-council/5796144743001/?term=&lan=original;
session 2: http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/treaty-bodies/watch/session-2-intersessional-seminar-on-family-older-persons-human-rights-council/5796150471001/?term=&lan=original;
session 3: http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/treaty-bodies/watch/session-3-intersessional-seminar-on-family-and-older-persons-human-rights-council/5796499906001/?term=&lan=original;
session 4: http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/treaty-bodies/watch/session-4-closing-intersessional-seminar-on-family-and-older-persons-human-rights-council/5796504080001/?term=&lan=original.

it harder for family members to provide care for their older family members. Stress, and being overburdened, combined with a lack of awareness about rights, could sometimes lead to abuse of older persons. Therefore, there was a need for new ways to support family caregivers, and to provide alternatives to family care. Furthermore, there were significant normative gaps in existing international human rights frameworks regarding the protection of older persons. National standards were weak in regard to age discrimination, an adequate standard of living, support for autonomy, participation in decision-making, and freedom from violence, abuse and neglect. Notwithstanding, Ms. Wendland noted that there had been encouraging developments, with older persons increasingly integrated in the human rights agenda as well as in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recognition of the potential of older persons to make significant contributions to families, communities and development.

III. Summary of proceedings

A. International framework for the protection of the family and human rights of older persons

5. The team leader for economic, social and cultural rights at the Human Rights and Economic and Social Issues Section of OHCHR, Rio Hada, moderated the first session, which was focused on the legal and policy framework at the international, regional and national levels for the protection of the family and the human rights of older persons. He asked panellists to reflect on the obligations and other key commitments that States had, under international and regional human rights instruments as well as under national laws, to protect the human rights of older persons and to support the role of the family towards that end.

6. The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, described the steady increase of the older population worldwide, and the fact that that population cohort itself was ageing. She warned of the profound effects of such a demographic transition on societies, at all levels, which was a growing concern for human rights. It was essential to analyse those phenomena in a comprehensive way, taking into account the whole range of human rights. Older persons were not a homogeneous group or a single category, and every person had different needs and interests. In addition, old age represented a social construction based on the custom and perception of the role that particular individuals played in their communities.

7. Often it was families who provided the front-line support for their older members, and who contributed to the realization of their right to an adequate standard of living, including the right to adequate food, clothing, housing, water and sanitation. Nevertheless, older persons were at risk of neglect within their families, as well as of physical, psychological, emotional, sexual or financial abuse. From a family perspective, an important concern was cash transfer and monetary assistance programmes, where the concept of household units did not take into account intra-household dynamics and did not recognize potential discrimination in distribution within the home.

8. Although family care was the preferred option for many older persons, there was a need for effective support systems for informal caregivers. Such systems should include respite, needs assessments, information and counselling services, self-help groups, hands-on training in caregiving, and the dissemination of information on health protection measures. They should also take into consideration the physical and mental health of caregivers, the need for weekend breaks, and integrated care planning for seniors and families. It was particularly important that social security schemes cover caregivers, since they were often women who did not receive any income or training, as the assistance provided by informal caregivers did not replace the obligation of States. National policies should help older persons to continue living in their homes for as long as possible through improvements to the housing and by adapting housing for access and use by older persons.

9. She noted that currently there was no universal human rights instrument specifically devoted to older persons, apart from implicit references and rare explicit references in some

human rights treaties. At the regional level, the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons obligated the States parties to prevent all forms of violence within the family or household and to ensure treatment with dignity for older persons. The United Nations Principles for Older Persons, of 1991, contained a section specifically devoted to care, in which it was stated that older persons should benefit from family care in accordance with the cultural values in each society. Nevertheless, the absence of a comprehensive and integrated international instrument had made it difficult to specify the obligations of States towards older persons. In addition, existing mechanisms and procedures for monitoring human rights instruments generally neglected older persons.

10. The Deputy Chair of the Council of the Federation Committee for Agricultural and Food Policy and Environmental Management, of the Russian Federation, Irina Gekht, described the constitutional mandates of her country to support the family and older persons, including State obligations to develop a system of social services, benefits and other social guarantees. Although there was no specific international agreement for older persons, the general international human rights treaties were applicable. For older persons, the family was one of the most important spheres in which to realize their needs. Nevertheless, physical, psychological and economic abuse sometimes occurred within the family. The failure of family members to fulfil their responsibilities with respect to nutrition was punishable by the criminal law. Identifying human rights violations in the family was difficult, since the family was a closed cell within society, where there were legislative limits on State intervention. In addition, the narrowing of social contacts, and older persons' lack of knowledge about their rights, reduced opportunities to receive outside assistance.

11. With the transition to a new economy, the intellectual resources, knowledge and experience of older persons had acquired special value, and the views on the role of older persons in the socioeconomic system were changing. Policies were aimed not only at preserving the quality of life and dignity of older persons, but also at creating the conditions for leading an active social and economic life. For example, the Russian Federation had adopted a strategy of action for older citizens aimed at increasing their life expectancy and quality of life and supporting active ageing. The strategy addressed the need to overcome negative stereotypes and manifestations of violence and discrimination against older persons, and to create a favourable environment and economic conditions that were conducive to active longevity and integration in society. It also included the establishment of geriatric services, and needs assessment systems for care, as well as training of older persons in physical exercise and sports.

12. Measures at the federal and regional levels aimed at protecting the rights of older persons in the family included generating awareness about the rights of older persons, counselling families caring for older relatives on social, medical, psychological and legal issues, setting up telephone hotlines for older persons subjected to domestic violence, establishing shelters for temporary stays, training lawyers to specialize in law relating to older persons, and supporting non-governmental organizations (NGOs) assisting older persons. Other initiatives were aimed at including older persons in the development process and promoting active ageing, for example through continuing education.

13. Despite the results achieved, differences remained in the quality of life of the older population, both between regions and between urban and rural areas. It would be necessary to continue working on realizing the rights of older persons in line with obligations arising from international instruments, and taking into account the best international experiences. Family policies should prioritize the preservation of traditional family values and family life, the revival and preservation of spiritual and moral traditions in family relations and family education, and the creation of conditions for ensuring family well-being and responsible parenthood.

14. The Special Envoy of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, Florence Simbiri-Jaoko, described the expected demographic changes in Africa, which included population growth, accelerated urbanization, decrease in fertility and mortality rates, increase in life expectancy, and ageing of the population. In that context, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights recognized the rights of older persons to special measures of protection. The same Charter recognized the duty of individuals to preserve the

harmonious development of the family and work for the cohesion of and respect for the family, to respect their parents at all times, and to maintain them in case of need.

15. The region had made further progress following the adoption, in 2016, of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa, by the Assembly of the African Union. The Protocol called upon Governments to institute urgent measures aimed at guaranteeing the rights of older persons. The rights identified included access to regular income, equitable distribution of resources, employment opportunities, access to appropriate health services, access to basic social services, access to good care and support, recognition of the contribution by older persons to the care of persons with HIV/AIDS and orphans, respect and recognition for older persons' role and contribution in society, and recognition of older persons' needs in emergency situations.

16. Notwithstanding the progress made, the Protocol had so far been signed by four countries and had not entered into force. And yet, it was an opportunity for African States to engage in a more robust discussion at the United Nations level on the need for an international legal framework. It offered the opportunity to highlight how States could nurture families as critical links to protection and respect of the rights of older persons. National human rights institutions could advocate for States to sign and ratify the Protocol, and could use it as a framework for measuring compliance by States that had adopted the Protocol. Legislation should allow national human rights institutions to monitor family care, since limited access to justice for those cared for by families meant that, many times, abuses went unreported. There was a need to move from a narrative of care to a rights-based approach, guided by human rights standards.

17. In the interactive dialogue, representatives of Brazil, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Mexico, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Uruguay, the European Union, AGE Platform Europe, Alliance Defending Freedom International, HelpAge International and Human Rights Watch made interventions. In the interventions, it was stressed that the family was the primary cell and fundamental basis of society, covering all its dimensions, and that it was a guarantor of all rights, cultural heritage, social cohesion and identity. Speakers also emphasized the primary responsibility of States to ensure the enjoyment of all human rights of individual family members, and to ensure there was no discrimination within the family, including multiple discrimination and gender inequality. In increasingly ageing societies, States must promote the independence and autonomy of older persons and protect them from all forms of violence and abuse.

18. Some speakers affirmed that the family was the natural place for older persons to live, and stressed the responsibility of the family in providing the conditions to allow older persons the enjoyment of their rights, including autonomy and independence. Others emphasized that, although family members played a fundamental role in caring for older persons, family support was not the only form of care, and there was a need to recognize the different forms of family in different cultural, social and political contexts. Some States said that the international community should pay greater attention to the family in its role in development as well as in protecting its members. In many interventions, speakers noted the normative gaps in the current international human rights framework concerning the protection of older persons, which required a dedicated binding instrument to be developed. Finally, some States described their national legal, institutional and policy frameworks, including systems of community-based care and support services.

19. In response, Ms. Simbiri-Jaoko said that many States in Africa were making progress in the area of the rights of older persons, and African States should seize the moment and ratify their protocol. Meanwhile, in the absence of a binding international instrument, national human rights institutions were already receiving complaints and reports of violations of human rights of older persons, and were providing remedies for them and acting as a link to the authorities, within their existing mandates. They also included the rights of older persons in their periodic reports to different national, regional and international mechanisms.

20. Ms. Gekht said that States needed to promote and support the participation of older persons in various social activities and movements, including through State provision of

grants, volunteer programmes and infrastructure. It was important for the State, in addressing the problems of unemployment and isolation, to promote the participation of older persons in social life, since having the feeling of involvement was very important for older persons' well-being.

21. Ms. Kornfeld-Matte emphasized that the only binding instrument in force was the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons, which had been ratified by several countries. She said that States could do more to support formal caregivers to complement informal family caregivers, who were often in situations of stress and provided care without respite. In addition, States could train informal caregivers, and create day centres for older persons to attend at certain times, as a way to avoid institutionalization in long-stay facilities. Finally, States should take advantage of the possibility of involving older persons in university networks for older persons, which would greatly help their socialization.

B. The role of the family in providing long-term care and support to older persons

22. In his introduction, the moderator, John Beard, Director of the Ageing and Life Course Department of the World Health Organization, said that the lack of support for family caregivers resulted in unnecessary burdens and in inadequate care for older persons and violations of their rights. Girls and women were often in charge of family care, which sometimes limited their possibilities for study or of having equal access to employment. Furthermore, in some countries, older women with dementia suffered accusations of witchery, and forced institutionalization. He noted several innovative developments, such as community-based self-help groups, and the creation of care economies that produced jobs for younger people while they cared for older persons. However, stewardship by governments was necessary for the success of any such initiatives. The moderator asked the panellists to explore the challenges faced by older persons in accessing long-term care and by the families supporting them, and to describe what responsibilities States and other stakeholders had in order to address those challenges while reinforcing the centrality of family.

23. Mona Ibrahem Isa Ahmed, of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs of Qatar, underscored the importance of the family in caring for its members as an integrated unit. A cohesive family could make significant contributions in providing support and care to the elderly. The Constitution of Qatar recognized that family was the basis of the society and was founded on religion, ethics and patriotism. In addition, the Constitution mandated the law to prescribe adequate means to protect the family, support its structure, strengthen its ties, and protect maternity, childhood and old age. Governments needed to support and encourage programmes and initiatives to support older persons, including for formal care for the elderly, to complement the support provided by members of the family.

24. Among the types of families in Qatar, extended families consisted of grandparents, mothers, fathers, children and grandchildren. Such a family structure gave older persons the opportunity for natural interaction with children and other relatives, and prevented them from suffering from isolation. A study had shown that over one half of older women, and one third of older men, lived in extended families. In addition, one poll on the social and environmental challenges faced by beneficiaries of the social security system had shown that less than 3 per cent of the population regarded caring for older persons in the family as troublesome.

25. Ms. Ahmed described policies aimed at supporting families and older persons, within government agencies such as the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs. The policies included a service that provided access for older persons to public offices, and hotlines for communication and coordination with social researchers, who were able to conduct case research or provide assistance through any of the services provided by the Ministry. Another project facilitated home care by means of specialized

nursing teams with rehabilitation staff, which conducted round-the-clock home visits to older patients.

26. The experience and research had proved that the best option for older persons was to live with family members and not in isolation, especially for older persons with disabilities. Home care reduced the feeling of isolation and psychological depression. Still, social changes, and the reduction of social links, posed challenges for older persons. As older persons' interactions became increasingly limited to closer relatives, it was the role of family to help them link with the wider society, for example by visiting heritage sites and participating in neighborhoods councils for older persons established by the State. Families should participate in those initiatives by the State aimed at promoting the involvement of older persons in society, and encourage older persons to participate, taking into account the valuable experience they had accumulated over the years. Finally, older persons should have access to social and legal services.

27. Xenia Scheil-Adlung, a health and long-term care policy adviser, described the global deficits regarding coverage and access to long-term care for older persons. Studies had shown that almost half of the world population that was aged over 65 lived in countries without any right to long-term care. Over 46 per cent of the world population lived in countries where policies demanded poverty as an eligibility requirement to receive long-term care. Just over 5 per cent of the world population aged over 65 lived in countries with universal long-term care systems. The population aged over 65 suffered exclusion from long-term care due to deficits in public expenditure. The unaffordability of those services implied the potential for impoverishment for many older persons in countries without universal coverage. In addition, significant workforce shortages in long-term care excluded people from accessing quality services. She noted that there was a gap of over 13 million long-term care workers globally.

28. There was therefore a need to define the role of family carers, while analysing who was filling the workforce gap to make services available and affordable. Studies had concluded that only 20 per cent of the long-term care workforce was composed of paid formal workers. The rest were unpaid informal workers; mostly female family carers aged over 40, caring for one or two persons. In high-income countries, family members provided up to 90 per cent of care, exceeding by far the number of formal care workers. In low- and middle-income countries the number of family carers was even higher, due to the lack of formal long-term care workers and infrastructure.

29. The high levels of reliance on family care had implications. For family carers, caregiving was highly demanding physically and mentally, sometimes resulting in burnout and ill-health due to lack of training and decent working conditions. It could result in loss of income or social protection, when it necessitated ending or reducing paid employment and no compensation was available. Work-family conflicts and risk of job loss could happen when providing care in addition to carrying out paid employment. For long-term care recipients, it implied an increased level of dependence due to physical and mental deterioration in the absence of quality services, high costs and potential impoverishment due to lack of income from family carers, and increased risks of abuse and violence due to family carers being overburdened as well as to lack of training. There were socioeconomic implications too, such as foregone economic growth and higher unemployment, higher public expenditure, increased income and gender inequities, and failure to comply with labour regulations.

30. Policy considerations to address those issues included public investment in creating jobs for formal long-term care workers, which would have multiplier effects in productive sectors, reduce unemployment and create economic growth and development. Similarly, investing in support for informal carers would avoid negative socioeconomic impacts. While the policy priority should be for home-based care, there was a need to ensure the rights of older persons by providing adequate access to long-term care, including universal coverage through fair financing mechanisms; and making quality services available by increasing the formal long-term care workforce. Moreover, it was necessary to establish support measures, such as funding for the delivery of long-term care services, cash benefits or income replacement, and social protection coverage, including leave time from care duties, training, and being replaced during vacations.

31. Nena Georgantzi, a human rights officer from AGE Platform Europe, focused on the challenges faced by older persons with regard to the right to self-determination and the right to the exercise of their legal capacity, in the context of care, and the link between those challenges and the role of the family. She affirmed that, due to ageist attitudes, there was a perception of older persons as being unable to make decisions, or else disregard for their will and preferences in all aspects of their lives. Families played a pivotal role in the care and support of many older persons, although not all older persons had families, or lived close to them. Therefore, it was crucial to consider the wide variety of experiences and living circumstances of older persons that did not necessarily take place in the context of the family.

32. Many situations illustrated the importance of increasing awareness of older persons as rights holders. For example, there were repeated cases of lack of informed consent within nursing homes and institutions. A report that monitored care homes in Europe had concluded that forcing older persons into institutions without their consent was a common practice. In some countries, families were encouraged to put older persons under legal guardianship in order to have access to care homes. Regarding control of their finances, even though older persons were entitled to pensions, many were not able to collect them themselves and depended on a relative to do so, which sometimes led to financial abuse.

33. In countries with high rates of unemployment, some families lived on the pensions of older persons, and many older persons had been put in informal care at home because their families could no longer afford the expenses of formal care. Such situations exposed them to risks, such as inadequate care, abuse and limited autonomy. In some cases, there was a potential conflict between what was best for the family and the wishes of the older person. For example, for the sake of safety, families sometimes limited older persons from participating in an active social life. Families were under pressure, especially as States shifted responsibility for caring for older persons to families and individuals and cut down on benefits and services. In most situations, families considered that they were doing what was best for older persons, which in fact could amount to a violation of their right to self-determination.

34. She noted the absence of adequate normative standards to prevent such situations. Ageism was a pervasive form of discrimination, with age stereotypes prevailing and going unchallenged, and injustices being overlooked or considered as normal. It entailed a risk of applying human rights in divergent, unfair ways in old age, instead of on an equal basis with others. The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing had warned that, although all human beings were born free and equal, the enjoyment of all human rights diminished with age, owing to negative prejudices and stereotypes. States had a duty to support families that provided informal care, and older persons. It would be important to recognize that older persons were rights holders on an equal basis with others, and to establish clear State obligations through a binding international convention.

35. In the interactive dialogue that followed, representatives of Lebanon, Qatar and the Russian Federation, of the Holy See, and of La manif pour tous, HelpAge International and Human Rights Watch, took the floor. Interventions by States reaffirmed the family as the basic core of a person's life and of society. Speakers emphasized that a strong family must enjoy support from the State to protect the rights of older persons, including through economic incentives and specific fiscal and job policies. One delegation stressed the need to create an enabling support environment where older persons would become agents of development. One State warned about the need to take into account the social and historical background of each State when designing policies such as long-term support systems. Another delegation pointed out that the migration of young people from some developing countries weakened the role of the traditional family as a support for older persons, putting their rights at risk. Some speakers described their national normative frameworks around the family and its members.

36. NGOs noted that the wishes and choices of older persons did not necessarily align with those of their family members, and that the absence of clear standards on the right to live independently and be included in the community caused risks of violations. Governments had an obligation to protect the rights of older persons on an equal basis with the rights of others in those contexts. Not every older person lived with, or chose to live

with family members. Despite this, States often transferred their human rights obligations towards older persons onto family members in relation to care and support, including through maintenance or filial piety laws, which increased the dependency of older persons and denied their autonomy. It was necessary to move away from an approach that excluded older persons from their communities and denied them their autonomy and independence, and instead move towards establishing and strengthening care and support services where older persons had the right, and access, to individualized support that enabled them to control their lives.

37. In response, Ms. Ahmed recalled that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized that the family was the natural and fundamental group unit of society and was entitled to protection by society and the State. In addition, many associations sought to preserve the unity of the family nucleus and to protect older persons from certain practices that may lead to breakdown of the family by isolating the older person. Society had to leave behind some negative practices and promote positive values. The State must intervene to assist families caring for older persons, including by creating institutional structures.

38. Ms. Scheil-Adlung said that as long as there was a link between family care and ill-health, loss of income, impoverishment or burnout, there would not be such a thing as free choice for family carers. It was necessary to support family carers and establish certain limits. Family carers could not replace formal skilled workers, especially when it came to Alzheimer's disease or other diseases that made family care difficult. A formal care force should support family carers, as without it, no family would be able to give proper care to older persons.

39. Ms. Georgantzi stressed that most human rights treaties did not provide an explicit prohibition of discrimination on the ground of age, and that there were many gaps in the application of the existing instruments. For example, it was still possible under international law to force an older person to retire after reaching a certain age, and in some countries there were different systems of treatment for younger persons with disabilities and older persons with disabilities. Family was not necessarily the context where all older persons lived; nevertheless, families shared the obligation with States to provide care and support for the elderly. A convention on the rights of older persons would protect their human rights and support families as a whole, as the instruments for other groups had done. Such a convention should guarantee the right to autonomy and independence, and establish explicitly that age was not an admissible ground on which to limit their legal capacity.

C. The role of the family in promoting age-friendly environments

40. The Chief of the Population Unit at the Economic Commission for Europe, Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, moderated the third session, which was focused on the role of the family in promoting age-friendly environments. She noted that family settings were becoming increasingly diverse, and that social contexts mattered when designing policies. Critical interdependencies between generations and between men and women within families would develop in daily interactions. Those interactions could be positive, but could also become a breeding ground for abuse and neglect of older persons. Ageism was one of the most socially normalized prejudices, which occurred in the family and also within the individuals themselves. Violence, abuse and neglect were extreme outcomes of ageism, which in most cases happened within the family. In that context, the moderator asked panellists to analyse those challenges, as well as the roles of the State and the family in promoting age-friendly environments and protecting and rights of older persons.

41. The Director of the Gerontology Programme at Brigham Young University, United States of America, Jeremy B. Yorgason, affirmed that, although many older adults faced discrimination in society in general, older persons who were isolated, dependent on others for their care, or had mental health, cognitive or emotional challenges, were at risk for mistreatment in some way. Those with poor or strained family relationships were at greater risk. Statistics showed that nearly half of the older adults in the United States experienced some limitation in activities of daily living. Individuals facing limitations who did not reside in long-term care facilities were likely to receive care from family members, most

often women. Although care services for older adults were growing, family caregivers provided the bulk of the care needed for older persons. It was also relevant to consider the expected amount of time that older persons might live without disability, since family often provided the care during those years of living with disability.

42. Research had found that family was one of the few institutions that did not segregate by age, and that young adults viewed older family members with less negative bias than they viewed older strangers. In addition, studies had indicated that when older spouses were in need of health care, both patients and their partners reported improved marital relationships. Still, although closeness may be one result of caring for an ill spouse or family member, caregiving was generally regarded as a stressful situation that placed great strain on family members. In consequence, overly strained family caregivers were more likely to violate the human rights of older recipients of care. Moreover, when abuse or violence had occurred in families in earlier years, it may be more likely to reoccur in later years.

43. The avenues for promoting age-friendly environments included addressing ageism within families through education. Quality of care improved when family caregivers were educated about the expected behaviours associated with dementia, and about how to communicate with and care for someone with diminished cognitive capacities in a kindly way. Beyond education, family caregivers benefited from emotional support from community support groups and other community resources. In addition, one of the greatest risk factors for mistreatment of older adults was social isolation. When a primary caregiver was the only person that a dependent older adult had contact with, the risk of mistreatment increased because of the increased strain and decreased outside surveillance. Involving secondary family caregivers and helping to coordinate their efforts could increase the safety of older adults and lessen burdens carried by primary caregivers. When there were multiple family caregivers, a natural check and balance occurred.

44. Although many community resources were available to caregivers, these did not focus on family relationships. Teaching families to communicate, resolve conflict, forgive past hurts and plan for the future could facilitate better care and lower the risk of abuse. Families could encourage a network of care providers for older family members, especially during times of care transition, such as when receiving a new diagnosis, during and after hospitalizations and during end-of-life care. Family members could support primary caregivers by facilitating their receipt of education, support and respite. Ultimately, families shared the responsibility to ensure quality care and thus protect the human rights of their ageing family members.

45. Marie Beaulieu, the Research Chair on Mistreatment of Older Adults at the Research Centre on Ageing, at Sherbrooke University, Canada, affirmed that age-friendly communities should have a positive approach in promoting the social inclusion of older adults, establish policies, programmes and actions to improve physical and social environments, and adopt a community-based strategy with an impact on individual well-being. She described the evolution of the definition of elder abuse and neglect, which was a social, public health and human rights problem. The World Health Organization had defined it as a single or a repeated act, or an absence of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there was an expectation of trust, which caused harm or distress to an older person.

46. The definition of elder abuse and neglect included violence. Mistreatment could be intentional, although many times it occurred unintentionally. The categories of abuse included physical, sexual, psychological, material and financial abuse, violation of rights, ageism and institutional mistreatment. Ageism consisted of negative or positive stereotypes, prejudice or discrimination against (or to the advantage of) older persons on the basis of their chronological age or their perceived age. It could be self-directed or other-directed, implicit or explicit, and expressed on different levels. It influenced everyone to varying degrees, by negative stereotypes and discourses. Those misguided assumptions led people to misinterpret various situations, which could ultimately lead to mistreatment.

47. The violation of rights occurred in all types of mistreatment, and implied the infringement of rights and freedoms. It included acts of violence, such as forced medical

treatment, as well as denial of the rights to choose, to vote, to privacy, to take risks, to receive phone calls or visitors, to practise religion and to express sexual identity. The concept of violation of rights also encompassed situations of neglect, including lack of information or misinformation regarding the rights of the older person, failure to assist the person in exercising their rights, and failure to recognize their capacities. The signs of violation of rights included preventing the older person from participating in making choices and decisions that affected his or her life, failure to respect his or her decisions, a family member answering on behalf of him or her, restricting visits or access to information, isolation, and complaints, among others.

48. A wellness approach to preventing mistreatment needed to focus on early detection and appropriate intervention, bringing together practitioners from various sectors to achieve a common goal. In addition, it was necessary to encourage and facilitate the reporting of cases, develop knowledge and improve knowledge transfer, and provide support for caregivers, including informal caregivers who were often family members. Several good practices at the national level were aimed at moving from countering abuse and neglect, to promoting well-being, respect for older persons' dignity, self-esteem, fulfilment, inclusion and security of the person. Governments should establish public policies and programmes that were proactive, that had a specific focus on mistreatment of older persons, and that were gender-specific, with participation from older adults' associations, practitioners and researchers, and with proper evaluation of their implementation.

49. In the ensuing dialogue, representatives of Bangladesh, Egypt, Maldives and the Russian Federation, and of AGE Platform Europe, Global Helping to Advance Women and Children, HelpAge International and Human Rights Watch, took the floor. One delegation said that respect for traditional family values could contribute to the promotion of and respect for human rights, and to the creation of a healthy family environment. States had an obligation to provide effective protection and support to the family. Another speaker stressed that older persons could make invaluable contributions to economic and social development, thanks to their knowledge, skills and experience. One delegation noted the importance of taking into account intergenerational relationships, which had been missing in the public debate. Some States described their national experience, including specialized services, social security systems, training to develop skills, legal protection, and the establishment of institutional bodies.

50. A representative from an NGO said that ageism was the only form of discrimination that was still widely accepted, and that it was the root cause of many human rights violations. Another speaker underlined the need to recognize that sexual violence and rape occurred within families — especially against widows, who faced social exclusion, segregation and social isolation. A youth representative recalled that the Human Rights Council had called upon States to promote opportunities for voluntary, constructive and regular interaction between generations in the family, in the workplace and in society. Young people and older persons alike benefited from intergenerational dialogue and interaction. Many speakers stressed the State responsibility in assuring older persons' enjoyment of their rights to privacy and a family life, non-discrimination, and freedom from violence, abuse and neglect in all settings. A dedicated international set of standards that articulated State obligations was necessary in order to promote an age-friendly environment.

51. In response, Mr. Yorgason warned that legislation that imposed compulsory care of older persons by families could lead to unpleasant situations and would be difficult to enforce. Regarding intergenerational relationships, research had shown that they were generally very positive for both grandparents and grandchildren. They should be encouraged and promoted, though people should be cautious that forcing such relationships could lead to negative outcomes. Sometimes parents and children did not get along, and grandchildren could become a healing connection between the other generations. Finally, he reflected on the difficulties of putting an actual value on elder care.

52. Ms. Beaulieu made a link between compulsory care and intergenerational solidarity. It was important to remind generations that they should have solidarity together, through education, values and shared points of view, however the imposition of family care could lead to elder abuse in some situations. When designing any policy, it was necessary to

consider the natural process of ageing in all its stages. In conclusion, carers of older persons had a demanding job, and often lacked proper training and proper pay. In high-income countries, immigrants often carried out that job, as nationals would not want to do it, which was another manifestation of age discrimination.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

53. For the closing session, the Chair invited four panellists from previous sessions to make concluding remarks and recommendations on the way forward to achieve greater protection of the family and the human rights of older persons. They were asked to share their views from the perspective of States, national human rights institutions, United Nations human rights mechanisms, civil society and academia.

54. Ms. Gekht said that ageism was characteristic of countries where a deterioration of traditional family values was occurring. This had an impact on the respect for older generations. With regard to the situation of older persons who rights were violated, the State needed to make extra efforts, alongside social organizations. The State needed to create a network of institutions in the long term, but also social institutions that protected older persons. Social organizations and associations had an important role in providing legal aid and information to citizens when necessary, as well as in promoting the active involvement of older persons in society, including through physical activities and sport. The State should intervene to ensure proper qualifications for older persons so that they were competitive in the labour market. This should be a joint effort with social organizations and international forums. It would be key to change the balance of the relationships between younger and older generations nationally, but also to examine complementary measures to protect the rights of older persons.

55. Ms. Simbiri-Jaoko affirmed that many of the issues raised concerned the lack of normative frameworks at the international and regional levels, which had an impact at the national level. For national human rights institutions, the main contributions would be, within existing normative frameworks, to employ creative processes to monitor the rights of older persons, by making specific use of norms, whether soft or hard law. National human rights institutions should advocate for comprehensive and holistic approaches by State parties at the national, regional and international levels, in order to ensure that existing frameworks protected the rights of older persons.

56. Additionally, national human rights institutions with investigative and complaints handling capacity should develop tools that took into account the circumstances of older persons. They needed to go beyond looking at the appearances and instead look at the practicalities of how older persons experienced their independence, autonomy and freedom. National human rights institutions, together with State and non-State actors, should work towards facilitating intergenerational dialogue aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness by family members about their critical role in promoting and protecting the rights of older persons. Even in regions with a long history of care institutions, a human rights-based approach was missing. Older persons everywhere felt a lack of respect for their dignity. National human rights institutions had the challenge, and the opportunity, of working harder to strengthen and apply normative principles that clearly established the parameters for upholding the rights of older persons at the national, regional and international levels.

57. Ms. Kornfeld-Matte said that older persons as a group remained invisible and often voiceless. Radical changes, including to family patterns and lifestyles, but also the gradual erosion of the traditional multigenerational family environment, increasingly left older persons without families and without support. The mandate of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons took into account the difficulties that older persons faced, and the fact that those difficulties required in-depth analysis and action in the light of the protection gaps. The

identification of best practices for implementing existing law had remained one of the priorities for her mandate.

58. Families were likely to contribute to the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living for their members. Older persons should have their preferences and best interests considered in all aspects of their lives. States should guarantee free and informed consent, and regulate conflicts of interest and undue influence. Legislation and policies should be aimed at preventing and detecting elder abuse, and should typify it as a criminal offence, and at protecting victims against reprisals. States should develop a strategy to raise awareness of the problem and inform older persons of their rights. It was important to assist families and other informal caregivers, including through training on human rights, health and human resources, through counselling, and by providing financial, social and psychological help, paying special attention to the role of older women as informal carers. There was a need for national home care and community-based care programmes as well as for social protection and poverty reduction programmes for older persons, especially in rural and remote areas.

59. The Sustainable Development Goals could help promote inclusive policies for older persons. However, references to older persons were rare in the Goals and the targets. Ensuring that no older person would be left behind would require recognizing the equal dignity of older persons, and recognizing and facilitating their contribution to society through the application of a rights-based approach. That lack of attention to older persons was a consequence of the absence of an international instrument on the rights of older persons, which could have formed a basis for integrating those issues into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There was unanimous support for the need to strengthen the protection of the fundamental rights of older persons; nevertheless, continued divergences existed among stakeholders on the way to address the issue. Several proposals for new instruments and measures existed, including the elaboration of a new convention.

60. Mr. Yorgason said that governments could provide support for local ombudsman services, where government agents met on a regular basis with older adults living in facilities to ensure that their rights were being met and protected. Furthermore, when allegations of mistreatment were made, adult protection services could investigate the allegations and refer them to the police when necessary. In situations of neglect, ombudsman services could connect families with appropriate community resources. Ombudsman and adult protection services could expand efforts to target high-risk populations, for example through additional oversight where violence in the family had taken place, in cases of care recipients with mental health concerns or in cases of extreme poverty.

61. Human rights violations often occurred where older persons were isolated or when the care receiver and a single caregiver were isolated. In situations where an older adult needed help with finances, the involvement of multiple family members would strengthen accountability and prevent abuse. New technologies could also help connect primary family caregivers with secondary family caregivers, and bring together family members, in order to prevent isolation. In addition, family-centred care could target relationship processes. For example, where elder abuse had occurred, an intervention could take place by the State and other actors, similarly to when child abuse or neglect had occurred. There should be accountability and rehabilitation of family relations. Family-centred care also implied that treatments and interventions were personalized, and they were culture- and gender-sensitive.

62. Representatives of Belarus, of the Holy See, and of Global Helping to Advance Women and Children, HelpAge International, Human Rights Watch and Vie Montante International intervened from the floor. One State representative reaffirmed the traditional role played by the family, which was the fundamental element supporting and protecting the rights of older persons in society. Yet, governments played a fundamental role, guaranteeing support to families that supported older persons, and should uphold guarantees protecting the rights of older persons, including social integration. Another delegation stressed the need to

strengthen solidarity among generations and encourage mutually responsible relationships between younger and older persons. As the natural and fundamental unit of society, where the principle of solidarity was lived out on a daily basis, the family was entitled to protection by society and the State.

63. A joint statement by non-governmental organizations called upon States to support intergenerational connections as a key part of social cohesion and of the fight against isolation, and also as a means of transmitting social and cultural values. States should ensure that persons ageing with disabilities had the best possible conditions of housing and support. One speaker said that the family relationship between older parents and adult children was absent in legislation on family reunification for refugees, and that narrow definitions of family and onerous conditions and waiting periods led to discrimination against older persons. Another speaker stressed that ageism was a universal prejudice and a discriminatory social norm that demanded a universal response, and that a clearly articulated prohibition of ageism and age discrimination in a new convention was essential.

64. Finally, one speaker stated that it was crucial to involve older persons in discussions regarding their rights, and to address their capabilities to contribute to society and their responsibilities in society. In response, all panellists agreed that the participation and involvement of older persons was crucial.